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March 12, 2010

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"Hurricane Katrina's floodwaters and the levee failures tested the strength of everyone in St. Bernard," said Rep. Melancon. **"Even though many in the Sheriff's Office were homeless and their headquarters were destroyed, these heroes of St. Bernard never stopped serving their community. Helping them cover the utility bills for their temporary housing is the least we can do to honor their sacrifices."**

Since the 2005 storms, Congressman Melancon has worked in Congress to reduce the financial burden on sheriff's offices, local governments, and other and public entities in south Louisiana that are still struggling to recover. After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Congressman Melancon worked to pass legislation [waiving 100 percent](#) of the local cost share requirement for disaster recovery projects in Louisiana, including today's grant for the St. Bernard Sheriff's Office. Before the local cost share was waved, many of the estimated 23,000 disaster recovery projects in Louisiana had been put on hold because local governments did not have the resources to pay the local cost share.

In 2007, Congressman Melancon worked with the Louisiana delegation and Congressional leadership to pass legislation allowing federal Community Disaster Loans (CDLs) to be forgiven for Katrina- and Rita-affected communities that could not afford to repay them. After the storms, over \$1 billion in CDLs were provided by the federal government to hurricane-affected local governments in Louisiana to help them continue funding daily operations, such as payroll for

law enforcement and emergency responders. Many local governments in south Louisiana still do not have the resources to repay this massive debt, as their tax bases were devastated by the storms. With the passage of the [2007 Supplemental](#) , FEMA was given the discretionary authority to forgive Katrina and Rita CDLs, paving the way for a huge financial burden to be lifted for local governments in south Louisiana.

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